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Item 100 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Sustainable development and international economic cooperation: implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/180 of 15 December 1998, the Commission on Human Settlements, acting as the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda (hereinafter "the Preparatory Committee"), held its organizational session in Nairobi on 13 May 1999. All items on the agenda were considered and concluded in one meeting. The Preparatory Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Provisional agenda for the organizational session (HS/C/PC.OS/1);

(b) Annotated provisional agenda and organization of work (HS/C/PC.OS/1/Add.1);

(c) Draft provisional rules of procedure for the Preparatory Committee (HS/C/PC.OS/2);

(d) Organization of work for the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee (HS/C/PC.OS/3);

(e) Special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda: report of the Executive Director (HS/C/17/3/Add.1), including, as annexes, first, the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session (A/53/267) containing proposals on the scope and organizational aspects of the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the Habitat Agenda, and, second, the full text of General Assembly resolution 53/180 of 15 December 1998 on the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;

(f) Financial resource requirements for the special session of the General Assembly and its preparatory activities: note by the secretariat (HS/C/PC.OS/INF/1);

(g) List of documents before the Preparatory Committee at its organizational session (HS/C/PC.OS/INF/2);

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(h) Resolution adopted by the Commission on Human Settlements at its seventeenth session on the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda: note by the secretariat (HS/C/PC.OS/INF/3).

II. Election of officers

A. Introduction

2. Welcoming all delegates to the organizational session of the Preparatory Committee, the Chair recalled that the session was being held pursuant to the request of the General Assembly as contained in its resolution 53/180. In paragraph 5 of that resolution, the General Assembly had decided that the Commission on Human Settlements would serve as the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly and, in paragraph 9 had invited the Commission to meet for two working days, in order, *inter alia*, to elect its officers, adopt appropriate rules of procedure and consider the organization of work for its first substantive session, to be held in Nairobi for five working days in May 2000.

3. At the request of the Chair, the representative of the secretariat read out the following communication which had been received from the Office of Legal Affairs at United Nations Headquarters in New York, regarding the composition of the Bureau of the Commission when serving as the Preparatory Committee:

> "In paragraph 6 of its resolution 53/180 of 15 December 1998, the General Assembly decided that the Commission, meeting as the preparatory committee for the special session, shall be open-ended to allow full participation of all States. Accordingly, when meeting as preparatory committee, the Commission will be open to the participation of all Member States of the United Nations and States Members of the specialized agencies and, therefore, all States are entitled to participate on an equal footing with the members of the Commission including being eligible to serve as officers of the Commission. Thus, when the Commission is meeting as Preparatory Committee, it is free to decide either to retain the bureau of its regular session or to elect a new bureau from among the representatives of its expanded membership."

4. The Chair informed the Committee that a meeting convened the previous day, comprising the chairs of all regional groups, together with members of the Bureau, had been briefed on that legal opinion. The resulting response was that four of the regional groups (Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean countries and Eastern Europe) had been in favour of the option of retaining the existing Bureau, while one of the groups (Western European and other countries) had preferred to elect a new Bureau. Following further discussion, the meeting had agreed that the members of the Bureau of the seventeenth session of the Commission from Latin America, Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe should be elected by acclamation and the group of Western European and other countries should present a new candidate for the post of one of the vice-chairs. The Chair submitted that proposal for consideration by the Preparatory Committee.

B. Discussion

5. The proposal was adopted unanimously. Accordingly, the following were declared elected by acclamation as members of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda:

Chair: Mr. Germán García-Durán (Colombia);

Vice-Chairs: Mr. Abdourahmane Sow (Senegal);
Mr. Vassil Marinov (Bulgaria);

Rapporteur: Mr. Hossein Fadaei (Iran, Islamic Republic of)

6. The Bureau was elected for a term of office covering the entire preparatory period, to end with the convening of the special session of the General Assembly in New York in June 2001.

7. The representative of the Western European and other countries said that the group would nominate a candidate at a later date. Accordingly, the Chair declared the position vacant until such time as the next formal session of the Preparatory Committee was convened.

III. Credentials

8. With regard to the procedure for the approval of credentials, as defined by rule 11 of the rules of procedure of the Commission on Human Settlements, the Chair pointed out that the Bureau had just been elected and that the registrants for the Commission on Human Settlements were the same as those for the Preparatory Committee. Accordingly, he proposed, and the Committee unanimously agreed, that the report on credentials should be submitted to the plenary of the Commission by the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee at the same time as the Bureau of the Commission submitted its report on credentials.

IV. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

A. Introduction

9. The Chair explained that the provisional agenda for the session, as contained in document HS/C/PC.OS/1, had been prepared by the secretariat on the basis of the provisions of paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 53/180.

B. Decision

10. The Preparatory Committee unanimously adopted the provisional agenda for the session, as contained in document HS/C/PC.OS/1, as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Credentials.
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
4. Rules of procedure of the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.
5. Organization of work for the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee.
6. Provisional agenda and other arrangements for the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee.
7. Other matters.
8. Adoption of the report of the session.
9. Closure of the session.

11. The Committee further decided to consider all items on the agenda in plenary.

V. Rules of procedure of the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda

A. Introduction

12. Introducing the item, the representative of the Executive Director suggested that the Preparatory Committee might wish to adopt the rules of procedure of the Commission, with two provisos based on paragraphs 6 and 7 of General Assembly resolution 53/180. He explained that, in paragraph 6 of the resolution, the Assembly had decided that, when meeting as the Preparatory Committee, the Commission should be open-ended to allow full participation of all States. Accordingly, the first proviso was that any references to States members of the Commission should be construed to mean all States. The second proviso was to take into account the provisions of paragraph 7 of resolution 53/180, in which the Assembly stressed the need for the effective participation of local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners in the preparation for the special session, as well as the need to ensure appropriate arrangements for their substantive contributions to the preparatory meetings, taking into account the practice and experience gained at the Habitat II Conference. Accordingly, for the second proviso, he proposed that the current rule 61 of the Commission's rules of procedure be replaced, *mutatis mutandis*, by rules 61 and 62 of the rules of procedure of the Habitat II Conference.

B. Discussion

13. One representative, expressing the view that the secretariat's proposal should be further examined at the next formal session of the Preparatory Committee, proposed the formation of a small working group to discuss the issue and to report back to the Preparatory Committee at its next formal session. In response, the Chair said that, in his view, the formation of a small working group might not be necessary, but that he welcomed comments from the floor.

Several delegations supported the secretariat's proposal and, following further discussion, consensus was reached.

C. Decision

14. The Preparatory Committee unanimously adopted, for its use, the rules of procedure of the Commission on Human Settlements with the following two provisos:

(a) In accordance with the decision of the General Assembly, as contained in paragraph 6 of its resolution 53/180, that the Preparatory Committee should be open-ended to allow full participation of all States, any reference to States members of the Commission in the Commission's rules of procedure should be construed to mean all States, thus according the same rights and obligations to all States during sessions of the Preparatory Committee;

(b) Taking into account the decision of the General Assembly, as contained in paragraph 7 of resolution 53/180, regarding the effective participation of local authorities, other Habitat Agenda partners and relevant actors of civil society in the preparatory meetings, the current rule 61 of the Commission's rules of procedure should be replaced, *mutatis mutandis*, by rule 61 and rule 62 of the rules of procedure of the Habitat II Conference, held in Istanbul from 3 to 14 June 1996. Those two rules read as follows:

"*Representatives of local authorities*

"*Rule 61*

"Representatives of local authorities, designated by accredited international associations of local authorities in consultation with national associations of local authorities, invited to the Conference may participate, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, its Main Committees and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group, on questions within the scope of their activities. Every effort shall be made to make the representation of local authorities balanced in terms of region, size and type of local authorities.

"*Representatives of non-governmental organizations*

"*Rule 62*

"1. Non-governmental organizations accredited to participate in the Conference may designate representatives to sit as observers at public meetings of the Conference and the Main Committees.

"2. Upon the invitation of the presiding officer of the body concerned and subject to the approval of that body, such observers may make oral statements on questions in which they have special competence. If the number of requests to speak is too large, the non-governmental organizations shall be requested to form themselves into constituencies, such constituencies to speak through spokespersons."

VI. Organization of work for the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee and provisional agenda and other arrangements for the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee

A. Introduction

15. The Chair proposed, and the Committee agreed, that items 5 (Organization of work for the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee) and 6 (Provisional agenda and other arrangements for the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee) should be considered together as they were interrelated.

16. Introducing the items, the representative of the Executive Director informed the Committee that the Secretary-General, in his report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, contained in document A/53/267, and also annexed to Commission document HS/C/17/3/Add.1, had recommended that the Commission might wish, during its seventeenth session, to consider the following items:

(a) The provisional agenda for the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee;

(b) The scope to be covered by the review and appraisal and, consequently, the substantive documents to be prepared by the secretariat for the first substantive session;

(c) The issues to be addressed by the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council session on human settlements to be held before the year 2001; and

(d) The issues to be addressed by the Commission on Human Settlements at its eighteenth session which would be supportive of the work being done by the Preparatory Committee.

17. He further informed the Committee that those recommendations had been brought to the attention of the

Commission at its seventeenth session and, following due consideration, the Commission had adopted the resolution contained in document HS/C/17/INF/3, on preparations for the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. In addition, that resolution, which had been transmitted to the Preparatory Committee, contained the recommendations of the Commission on Human Settlements on, *inter alia*, all of the issues covered in subparagraphs 15 (a)-(c) above. He proposed that the Preparatory Committee might wish to transmit those recommendations to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

18. In conclusion, the representative of the Executive Director recalled paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 53/180, in which the Assembly had invited the Preparatory Committee to meet in Nairobi for five days in May 2000 and, in that regard, he informed the Committee of the secretariat's proposal that the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee should be held in Nairobi from 8 to 12 May 2000.

B. Discussion

19. One representative, speaking on behalf of the European Union, highlighting the importance of the Habitat Agenda and the need to undertake a review of its overall implementation, wondered what had been achieved in that process to date, what constraints had been encountered and how the activities could be more effectively focused. He also stressed the importance of identifying successes and failures and the exchange of good practices, as well as the need for a clearer focus on reporting and for additional contributions from other major stakeholders. In addition, it was important to adhere to a strict programme and to promote the participation of partners. In conclusion, he noted that the dialogues made an important contribution to the work of the Commission.

20. With regard to the recommendations in the draft resolution to be transmitted to the Preparatory Committee by the Commission, the Chair suggested that the Committee should focus its attention on paragraphs 1 and 2 and, specifically, on subparagraphs (a), (b) and (c) of paragraph 3 of that draft resolution. With regard to subparagraph 3 (a), he also conveyed the recommendation of the Bureau to the effect that an additional item, entitled "Preparation of a declaration on the role and mandate of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)", taking account of the proposed draft declaration contained in document HS/C/17/CRP.6, and the inputs already provided by several Member States, should be added to the agenda of the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee.

C. Decision

21. The Committee unanimously agreed to adopt the recommendations from the Commission, with the proposed amendments, and to transmit them to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session. The secretariat's proposal concerning the date and venue for the first substantive session was also adopted unanimously.

22. The recommendations of the Commission as amended and adopted were as follows:

> "The provisional agenda for the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee should include:
>
> "(a) Scope to be covered by the review and appraisal process;
>
> "(b) Local, national and regional preparations for the special session of the General Assembly;
>
> "(c) Role of local authorities, other partners and relevant United Nations organizations and agencies in the review and appraisal process;
>
> "(d) Preparation of a declaration on the role and mandate of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat);
>
> "(e) Provisional agenda and organizational arrangements for the second substantive session of the Preparatory Committee".

23. The proposal of the secretariat that the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee be held in Nairobi from 8 to 12 May 2000 was also adopted unanimously.

VII. Other matters

24. One representative requested that, at its first substantive session, the Preparatory Committee should take account of each Member State's commitments and progress in implementing the global plan of action. The Chair supported that proposal.

VIII. Adoption of the report of the session

25. As there had been no time for the preparation of the report of the session, the Chair proposed, and the Committee agreed, that the secretariat should be entrusted with the preparation of the report, which could then be reviewed and approved by the Bureau on behalf of the Committee.

26. On 18 August 1999, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee informed the secretariat of the Bureau's approval and adoption of the report on behalf of the Preparatory Committee.

IX. Closure of the session

27. The Chair declared the session closed at noon on 13 May 1999.